

Minutes Youth Council Meeting

Georgia Mountains Workforce Development
August 1, 2013
Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
Gainesville, GA

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Youth Council met on Thursday, August 1, 2013 at the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission –Conference Room, in Gainesville, GA. All those present registered on a sign in sheet.

Members

Angie Hanes
Lee Highsmith
Nikki Simmon-guest
Shanna Cotton-guest
Bonnie Loffredo

Staff

Danielle Avelar
Samantha O'Day
John Phillips
Patrick Shuler
Ebony Tucker
Jessica Williams

Jessica Williams, Youth Program Supervisor, welcomed attendees and called meeting to order.

New Business

****Voting on previous meeting minutes will be postponed until the next meeting, giving other council members that were not in attendance time to look over them.**

Jessica introduced Samantha O'Day, Youth Intake Specialist. Samantha is in charge of the "Cruisin for Coats" coat drive. She informed the council that she has placed boxes in each county we serve to collect coats. The car show that will end the drive will be held on September 14, 2013 at the Thunder Road/Georgia Racing Hall of Fame in Dawsonville, GA. Samantha explained that there will be community information booths at the event and asked the council if they have ideas of vendors, they should contact her. There is no fee for setting up both at the car show. She also asked for help in getting door prizes donated. All of the coats that are collected will be distributed throughout the county they came from with the help of local agencies.

Jessica asked that the council help get the word out on both coat drive and the final event.

Leigh Highsmith, Junior Achievement suggested that Samantha contact the chairman of the Junior League Thrift Event for coats that do not sell at the event and the Women's Source and First Baptist Church for their Emporium to see if she can place boxes there to collect coats.

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Jessica addressed the next item on the agenda. She discussed the need for new council members. The council has lost several members for various reasons and she would like remaining members to assist her in getting nominations in for approval. So far the council has one recommendation for Niki Simmons to be Clark Willingham's replacement. Niki is the Job Corps Recruiter for our region. Other possible nominations mentioned are Elaine Bentley or Jerry Campbell from Camp Toccoa. They were a worksite this year during the summer program and would like to be involved throughout the year as well.

Jessica asked that nominations be submitted to her and she will present them to the Workforce Investment Board. She stated that these nominations should be people that work closely or have affiliation with the youth in our region.

Leigh asked what the requirements of a council member were. Jessica explained that meetings are held quarterly. Members would need to attend and help with resources and getting information about our programs and services out in the community. Jessica stated that we also need to have a new chairman for the council, because the previous one stepped down from the council.

Ebony Tucker, Youth Case Manager went over youth achievements. So far this year we have eight youth that have found regular unsubsidized employment, three of which were hired at worksites developed by youth staff. Six youth will be starting college in the fall and transitioning to the College Assistance Program. Two youth obtained their GED diplomas and four participants will be transitioning to the Y.E.A.R. work experience program.

Jessica talked to the group about the possibility of outsourcing youth services for Lumpkin and White Counties. She explained that it has been extremely difficult to get programs started in both of these counties. Jessica and Workforce Development Director, John Phillips met with Kevin Klauson from Parents Educating Parents, Inc. Mr. Klauson went over a proposed budget for creating programs in these counties. Jessica explained that he would be responsible for making sure the 10 required elements were implemented. Also he would be responsible for case management, tutoring, workshops and all other program elements for these counties. The total budget was \$130,077.00. Jessica explained that all services that are now offered are provided by youth staff. This is an idea and she wanted input from the council.

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Leigh asked for a per participant cost for programing, Jessica explained that there are limits but they vary from participant to participant, depending on services provided, but she would try to come up with an approximate figure and get back to her.

John stated that he would like to see youth services being provided to all the counties in our region and asked that council continues to work with staff to make connections in the region.

Jessica explained that by outsourcing the agency would be in the county and have offices established there, which makes it easier for reaching youth in the community. She further explained that it takes someone in the county to take an interest and to spearhead the process for setting up programing. It has been successful in some counties, but not all of them.

Angie Hanes, a parent asked if staff have worked with Family Connections. Niki asked if contact had been made with DFCS and the graduation coaches in the high schools. Jessica stated that staff has tried these avenues and have not been successful in Lumpkin and White.

Patrick Shuler, Program Assistant stated that he had been working on an alternative route for getting into Lumpkin County. He has been working on getting a program started with Rainbow House, a group home for girls. Jessica gave details of the Life Skills Instructor. This will be a contracted position in which the contractor will work with youth through workshops and various other programing in the region, to assist youth in developing life skills and good work ethic.

Danielle Avelar, Youth Case Manager provided the council with an update on the 2013 Summer Work Experience Program. This year 91 youth to started in the program and 84 finished giving a 92% completion rate. The number of youth served this summer was an increase from last year. She explained that each summer the youth are given homework assignment to submit each week, this year youth were given the book "Bring your A Game to Work" with six assignments that were due at the end of each week they worked. She shared several excerpts from the assignments submitted.

She also mentioned that we are planning to add tutoring programs in Dawson and East Hall High School. Staff has already begun planning for summer 2014 and the overview sessions will begin in January 2014.

